
Creation of Category VII Special Purpose Schools

The Background:

In Tennessee, there are a variety of situations where education takes place in non-traditional settings. This frequently happens in Pre-K programs, where the home organization may be a for-profit, non-profit, college/university or community-based organization. This also happens where organizations provide education to students while they receive medical care or protective services. In these instances, students are away from a regular school setting and usually placed there for a short period of time.

By meeting the standards for this new category of schools, these organizations will be able to provide pre-K and/or K-12 educational services to students in an approved setting. Teachers will be able to advance licenses according to the appropriate evaluation steps and receive experience for salary purposes.

The Recommendation:

The Department of Education recommends the creation of Category VII schools and recommends adoption of the following amendments to rules to define and guide these schools on final reading. The SBE staff concurs with this recommendation.

Category VII Special Purpose Schools

Paragraph (1) of Rule 0520-7-2 -.01 Categories is amended by deleting the paragraph and inserting the following language so that as amended the paragraph shall read:

- (1) There shall be seven categories of non-public schools in Tennessee.

Paragraph (1) Rule 0520-7-2-.01 Categories is amended by adding subparagraph (g) so that as amended the subparagraph shall read:

- (g) Category VII schools are special purpose schools which address a student's education while receiving pre-K program services or short term medical or transient care.

Paragraph (1) of Rule 0520-7-1-.03 Student Transfers is amended by deleting the paragraph in its entirety and substituting the following so that as amended, the rule shall read:

- (1) Students may transfer among public schools, or Category I, II, III, or VII non-public schools without loss of credit for completed work. See Chapter 0520-1-3. The school which the student leaves must supply a properly certified transcript showing the student's record of attendance, achievement, and the units of credit earned. However, this rule shall not be construed as to supersede any contractual obligation of parents with the non-public school (e.g. withholding of grades until all tuition/fees are paid).

Rule 0520-7-2 is amended by adding the following rule:

0520-7-2-.08 CATEGORY VII: SPECIAL PURPOSE SCHOOLS

- (1) A school may seek state approval by direct application to the State Department of Education. The criteria and procedures used in the evaluation of such schools are the same as for the public schools and schools recognized as Category I schools including, but not limited to:
 - (a) Teaching experience shall count towards years of experience on the Personnel Information Reporting System.
 - (b) Teachers shall be evaluated by Tennessee Department of Education personnel or others trained in the use of the Frameworks for Evaluation (Pursuant to 0520-1-3-.04) so that licensure advancement can occur.
 - (c) Schools may report attendance to the school where the student is officially enrolled where applicable.

- (d) Schools may order and administer Gateway tests to current students to help them stay on track for graduation.
 - (e) Special Purpose Category VII schools shall be deemed appropriate training schools for those seeking specialized student teaching placements. Teacher candidates must satisfy the induction requirements in Rule 0520-2-3-.11.
- (2) Organizations seeking approval for Pre-K programs as Category VII schools shall, in addition to meeting the requirements of this rule, satisfy Pre-K program requirements outlined in Rule 0520-1-3-.05 and the State Board of Education Early Childhood Education Policy.
 - (3) Each school shall comply with the requirements of T.C.A. 49-6-3007 regarding the reporting of the names, ages, and addresses of all pupils in attendance to the superintendent of the public school system in which the school is located.
 - (4) Each school shall comply with all rules, regulations and codes of the city, county, and state regarding planning, construction, maintenance and operation of the school.
 - (5) Each school shall observe all fire safety regulations and procedures promulgated by the Tennessee Fire Marshal.

Authority: T.C.A. 49-6-3001